

# BULGARIAN SYNOD RESPONDS TO EUROPEAN COURT'S ORDER TO LEGALLY PROTECT GAY COUPLES

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The Bulgarian government must request a review of the European Court of Human Rights' decision from September 5 obliging the state to create a legal framework to afford legal recognition and protection to gay couples, says the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

[The Synod stated](#) after its meeting on November 22:

The Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church-Bulgarian Patriarchate, based on the teaching of Christ's Church about man as a great creation of God, the national constitutional identity of Bulgaria, and the supremacy of law, has no right and cannot afford not to uphold its consistent position on the issue of the concept of "gender," marriage, family, and child protection. Marriage and family, understood as a God-blessed union between a man and a woman, are an age-old inviolable value for Christianity. For Christianity, there exists only one concept of gender, which stems from the biological nature of man as a creation of God.

Thus, the state must seek review of the decision in order to safeguard Christian truth, as well as to "to protect Bulgaria's authority as a sovereign state governed by the rule of law."

To implement the ECHR's decision would violate the binding decision of Bulgaria's Constitutional Court from [October 26, 2021](#):

The principles and provisions of the current Constitution do not allow us to deduce a positive obligation of the state to legally respect the self-determination of persons by gender other than biological, since this would be incompatible with the content of the constitutional term "gender" as fundamental to the constitutional and legal basis of marriage and family.

Asked to give its opinion in the run-up to the Court's decision, the Bulgarian Synod stated in [June 2021](#):

Adding content to the concept of 'gender,' apart from its biological understanding, would 'constitutionalize' a new concept incompatible with the Bulgarian social order,

unknown in our national legal system, and would promote ideas incompatible with ancient moral values and the faith of the Holy Orthodox Church, and the Eastern Orthodox faith is part of the national and constitutional identity of Bulgaria.

And concluding its new statement, the Synod writes:

Beyond all human legal principles stand God's laws. We Christians cannot and should not be indifferent when we witness injustice. God's punishment will befall not only those who do evil, but also those who remain silent and do not expose it. Each of us will answer before God and our own conscience for our actions. As we do not know God today, do not keep His laws, and live sinfully, the inevitable day will come when we meet Him and the most frightening words we will hear will be: *I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity* (Lk. 13:27). Therefore, we urge you to fulfill your state duty and take actions to reconsider the decision of the ECHR from 09.05.2023 on case 40209/20 Koilova and Babulkova vs. Bulgaria.

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